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**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-2402**

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March 3, 2010

Mr. Julius Genachowski  
Chairman  
Federal Communications Commission  
445 12<sup>th</sup> Street SW  
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Genachowski:

I am writing this letter to offer my recommendations to the Federal Communications Commission as it considers implementing its National Broadband Plan. My office in conjunction with the Mississippi State Conference NAACP, the Center for Social Inclusion, Jackson State University and Tougaloo College held a public hearing in January that addressed concerns that greatly affect some of Mississippi's more economically distressed communities.

Specifically, it is my recommendation that the Federal Communications Commission ("FCC" or "Commission") consider promoting infrastructure expansion, require affordable service through regulatory measures; prescribe data collection, implement requirement tracking of equity impacts and support last mile projects that improve public health and education and stimulate economic development and job creation.

As a recent study by CSI and the MS NAACP notes, nearly 70% of my constituents are minorities yet on average, there are fewer than two broadband providers per zip code within my District. This is particularly alarming given the correlation between the number of broadband providers and the number of businesses in our state.

Broadband is essential, not only for economic development, but for increasing educational attainment, improving public health and enhancing agricultural efficiency and profitability in rural, low-income communities of color.

In an effort to ensure that residents of poor, rural communities of color like those in the Mississippi Delta have access to broadband and its benefits, I encourage the FCC to take the following steps in the National Broadband Plan:

- **Promote federal support for projects that combine infrastructure expansion, community access and development of demand.**

Sustainable federal support for projects that not only expand broadband infrastructure, but also provide community access and fuel the development should be sanctioned by the FCC. Programs like the National Technology and Information Administration's ("NTIA's") Broadband Technology Opportunities Program (BTOP) has developed a Comprehensive Community Infrastructure component designed to help support middle-mile projects that provide service at anchor institutions within rural communities, create jobs and foster economic development. These steps will

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help to generate demand for broadband and incentivize further investment in infrastructure.

- **Require affordable service in communities of color and low-income communities through subsidies or expansion of the Universal Service Fund Lifeline.**

It is imperative that the affordability challenges that bar low-income households and people of color from accessing broadband and other innovative technological advances be addressed. It is my recommendation that broadband becomes a universal service offered to all persons in all areas, regardless of socioeconomic conditions. According to the Center for Media Justice, this would not only make resources available to subsidize expanded access, but also require network neutrality.

Alternatively, the FCC could suggest that subsidies be made available to help service providers offer low-cost options to consumers. However, as media democracy advocates have noted, subsidies must be tied to accountability metrics, including publication and reporting requirements that ensure that eligible individuals are informed of and encouraged to utilize affordable service options.

- **Prescribe reporting and publication requirements that allow assessment of project impacts in low-opportunity communities and communities of color.**

I recommend that FCC require BTOP recipients and future broadband deployment grants to collect data illustrating the impacts of their work. This data must be disaggregated by demographic categories and geographic location. This information must be submitted as part of a quarterly reporting process in formats that members of the public can analyze and interpret, such as mapping files and standard database formats.

Administering agencies should, in turn, make quarterly reports available on a searchable website so that members of the public can evaluate whether federal dollars are expanding broadband access for all Americans.

- **Call for funding for projects that solve the last mile problem for providers of important services such as health and education and initiatives that foster job creation and economic development.**

It is imperative that FCC facilitate the management of additional funds for projects that address the last mile problem for providers of critical services. Lack of access to fast, dependable broadband hampers innovations in education, health and economic development. In under-resourced and impoverished rural communities like the many parts of the Mississippi Delta, broadband would allow for an improvement in educational resources and content and easier transition of medical records among medical facilities.

Broadband has the ability to provide economic development opportunities to small businesses and farmers who are looking for a more profitable and efficient way to revolutionize their businesses. Though there are many challenges involved in providing broadband capability to Americans, the potential rewards are great. I am eager to work with the Commission to ensure that the National Broadband Plan fosters a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy in which low-income people and people of color are active participants. I am more than willing to meet to discuss these matters with you. If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact Mr. Cory Horton in my Washington, DC

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office at 202.225.5876. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bennie G. Thompson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Bennie" being more prominent.

Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

BGT:wc



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION  
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF  
THE CHAIRMAN

May 12, 2010

The Honorable Bennie G. Thompson  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2432 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Thompson:

Thank you for your letter offering recommendations for inclusion in the National Broadband Plan.

In recognition of the fact that broadband services are still not available to Americans in many areas, Congress entrusted the FCC with a matter of profound importance to the country: to develop a National Broadband Plan to ensure that *all* people of the United States have access to broadband capability—from our inner cities to our small towns and the broad reaches of rural America. The FCC delivered the National Broadband Plan to Congress on March 16, 2010.

*Connecting America: The National Broadband Plan* is a 21<sup>st</sup> century roadmap to spur economic growth and private investment, create jobs, educate our children, protect our citizens, and engage in our democracy. It's an action plan for what is necessary to meet the challenges of global competitiveness, and harness the power of broadband to advance important national purposes, such as improved health care delivery and energy efficiency.

The Plan found that while broadband access and use have increased over the past decade, the nation must do much more to connect all individuals and the economy to broadband's transformative benefits. Nearly 100 million Americans lack broadband at home today, and 14 million Americans do not have access to broadband even if they want it.

The Plan calls for action to achieve the following goals within the next decade, including intermediate steps along the way:

- Connect 100 million households to affordable 100-megabits-per-second service, building the world's largest market of high-speed broadband users and ensuring that new jobs and businesses are created in America.
- Provide every American community with affordable access to ultra-high-speed broadband of at least 1 gigabit per second at anchor institutions such as schools, hospitals, and military installations so that America is hosting the experiments that will produce tomorrow's ideas and industries.

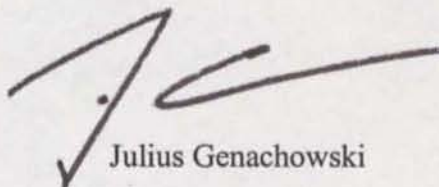


- Ensure that the United States is leading the world in mobile innovation by making 500 megahertz of spectrum newly available for licensed and unlicensed use.
- Move our adoption rates from roughly 65 percent to more than 90 percent and make sure that every child in America is digitally literate by the time he or she leaves high school.
- Bring affordable broadband to rural communities, schools, libraries, and vulnerable populations by transitioning existing Universal Service Fund support from yesterday's analog technologies to tomorrow's digital infrastructure.
- Enhance the safety of the American people by providing every first responder with access to a nationwide, wireless, interoperable broadband public safety network.

I appreciate your interest in the many benefits broadband can bring to communities across the country. I am pleased that many of the ideas you propose in your letter are incorporated into the Plan. For example, the Plan addresses the need to encourage the adoption of broadband through training and other programs. It also provides direction to reform our universal service policies to better serve low income consumers, as well as better serving our nation's educational and health care needs.

We entered your letter into the public record for this proceeding. I appreciate your input into the Plan. If you need anything further, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'J. Genachowski', written over a horizontal line.

Julius Genachowski